

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 13263 141128Z

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SUBJECT: DISTRUST BETWEEN PARTIES CLOUDS FUTURE OF ITALIAN
POLITICAL SCENE

SUMMARY. THE CURRENT POLITICAL SCENE IS COMPLICATED BY THE SUSPICION AND EVEN ANIMOSITY WHICH EXISTS AMONG VARIOUS LAY PARTIES AND BETWEEN THEM AND THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS (DC). THIS SITUATION IS ONE OF THE FUNDAMENTAL OBSTACLES TO THE FORMATION OF A MULTI-PARTY COALITION EXCLUDING THE COMMUNISTS (PCI). AT THE SAME TIME IT CONTRIBUTES TO A FEELING OF PESSIMISM ABOUT THE ITALIAN SITUATION WHICH IS MANIFESTED BY A CONCLUSION HELD BY SOME INFLUENTIAL PERSONAGES THAT THE ENTRY OF THE PCI INTO AN ITALIAN GOVERNMENT IN THE FORSEEABLE FUTURE IS INEVITABLE. THE POSSIBILITY OF REVERSING THIS TREND WOULD BE HEIGHTENED BY DC RENEWAL AND REJUVENATION, BY SOLID ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE CURRENT ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT, BY CHANGES IN THE LEADERSHIPS OF THE LAY PARTIES OR BY PCI STUMBLING OVER HANDLING OF DOMESTIC SITUATION OR AS CONSEQUENCE OF UNFRESEEN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS. CIRCUMSTANCES CALL FOR GREATER US ATTENTION TO LAY PARTIES IN ANY ATTEMPT TO COUNTERACT THE CURRENT TRENDS. END SUMMARY.

1. ON OF THE MOST NOTABLE DEVELOPMENTS ON THE CURRENT ITALIAN
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PAGE 02 ROME 13263 141128Z

POLITICAL SCENE IS THE GROWING SUSPICION AND ANIMOSITY

AMONG THE VARIOUS LAY PARTIES ON THE ONE HAND AND BETWEEN THEM AND THE DC ON THE OTHER HAND. THE MOST EXPLICIT PROOF OF THIS TREND IS THE DECISION OF ALL THE LAY PARTIES, INCLUDING THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS (PSDI) AND THE REPUBLICANS (PRI), WHO HAVE BEEN AMONG THE MOST LOYAL DC COALITION PARTNERS IN THE POST-WAR PERIOD, TO ABSTAIN FROM SUPPORTING THE PRESENT ANDREOTTI NOMOCOLORE GOVERNMENT.

2. THE CAUSES FOR THIS DEVELOPMENT ARE MANY AND CARRIED, AND THEY ARE LIKELY TO PROVE DIFFICULT TO OVERCOME, PARTICULARLY ON A SHORT TERM BASIS. THIS IS ONE OF THE REASONS, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT AN INCREASING NUMBER OF OBSERVERS OF THE ITALIAN SCENE ARE PREDICTING A RELATIVELY LONG LIFE FOR THE ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT SINCE THERE APPEAR TO BE NO OTHER VIABLE ALTERNATIVES. OBVIOUSLY AT THE CORE OF THE PROBLEM IS RESENTMENT BUILT UP OVER THE YEARS BY THE MANNER IN WHICH THE DC WIELDED ITS HEGEMONY ON THE ITALIAN SCENE. THE CROWNING BLOW CAME WITH THE RECENT ELECTIONS IN WHICH THE DC, WHICH IS PERCEIVED BY THE LAY PARTIES AS HAVING FAILED THE COUNTRY AND BROUGHT ITALIAN DEMOCRACY TO THE POINT WHERE THE PCI IS ON THE VERGE OF ENTERING THE GOVERNMENT, SCORED VIRTUALLY ALL ITS GAINS FROM VOTES DRAWN FROM ITS TRADITIONAL COALITION PARTNERS. AT THE SAME TIME, WITH ITS TRADITIONAL PARTNERS TAKING POT SHOTS AT IT BOTH DURING THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN AND IN THE POST-ELECTORAL PERIOD, IT IS NO SURPRISE THAT THE DC ATTITUDES TOWARDS THESE PARTIES HAVE COOLED SOMEWHAT EVEN THOUGH IT IS RECOGNIZED BY MANY THAT THE DC NEEDS THEM NOW MORE THAN EVER.

3. MAKING THE SITUATION STILL MORE DIFFICULT ARE THE PERSONALITIES OF THE INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE BEEN LEADING THESE PARTIES. TWO OF THE PARTIES, THE PSDI AND THE PRI, ARE NOW LED BY AGING VETERANS (SARAGAT AND LA MALFA RESPECTIVELY) WHO HAVE BEEN ON THE SCENE SINCE THE END OF THE WAR. IN THE CASE OF SARAGAT, HE HAS INDICATED HIS INTENTION TO BOW OUT FROM THE LEADERSHIP OF HIS PARTY WHICH WAS BADLY BATTERED IN THE RECENT ELECTIONS (IN HIS VIEW THANKS TO THE DC AND THE US). HOWEVER, THERE IS NO APPARENT HEIR APPARENT, AND THE PARTY LEADERS ARE BITTER AND DEEPLY DIVIDED, MAKING THE TASK OF FINDING SOMEONE TO INHERIT THE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ROME 13263 141128Z

LEADERSHIP MANTLE MORE DIFFICULT. IN THE CASE OF THE REPUBLICANS, LA MALFA SHOWS NO SIGNS OF THINKING OF PASSING ON THE REINS OF THE PARTY, AND IN ANY EVENT, THE PRI LACKS ANYONE OF SUFFICIENT NATIONWIDE STATURE TO ENSURE THAT ITS FORTUNES WOULD NOT SUBSTANTIALLY SUFFER WERE LA MALFA TO LEAVE THE SCENE AT THIS POINT. FINALLY, THE SOCIALISTS HAVE JUST EXPERIENCED THE PASSING OF THE BATON TO YOUNGER LEADERSHIP. HOWEVER, THE NEW SECRETARY HAS NOT YET HAD

SUFFICIENT TIME TO CONSOLIDATE HIS POWER AND HIS LEADERSHIP IS CONDITIONED BOTH BY THE INFLUENCE OF THE SOCIALIST OLD GUARD AND THE POLICY LINE SET DOWN AT THE LAST PARTY COUNGRESS.

4. SYMPTOMATIC OF THE PESSIMISM THAT PERVALES THE THINKING OF AT LEAST SOME OF THE LAY PARTY LEADERS IS AN EDITORIAL WRITTEN BY UGO LA MALFA WHICH APPEARED IN LA VOCE REPUBBLICANA AUGUST 10. LA MALFA DESCRIBES THE CURRENT POLITICAL CRISIS CONGRONTING THE COUNTRY AS BEING A CONSEQUENCE "OF THE INSUFFICIENCIES, OF THE IMPROVISATIONS, EVEN OF THE WRONG-DOINGS THAT HAVE CHARACTERIZED THE ACTION OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTIES, BEGINNING WITH THE DC, IN THESE YEARS." EX-PRESSING DOUBT THAT THE DEMOCRATIC PARTIES AS NOW CONSTITUTED HAVE THE POLITICAL WILL TO CORRECT THEIR ERRORS OF THE PAST, LA MALFA WROTE THAT "I HAVE NEVER SAID THAT THE COMING TO POWER OF THE PCI WILL RESCUE ITALY FROM THE CRISIS BUT THAT THIS IS THE FINAL CARD THAT ONE SHOULD PLAY." OBVIOUSLY, LA MALFA'S SCORN IS RESERVED NOT ONLY FOR THE DC BUT ALSO FOR THE OTHER LAY PARTIES. IN FACT, HIS DISTASTE FOR THE SOCIALISTS (WHICH IS RECIPROCATED BY THEM TOWARDS THE PRI) IS WELL KNOWN AND EVEN COMES THROUGH IN THE ABOVE-MENTIONED EDITORIAL IN THE FORM OF A PERSONAL ATTACK ON A SOCIALIST SENATOR (THE NEWLY ELECTED CHAIRMAN OF THE SENATE'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE)).

5. IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES THE PROSPECTS FOR RE-VERSING THE PRESENT FEELING OF PESSIMISM AND FOR IMPROVING THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE DEMOCRATIC PARTIES CANNOT BE CONSIDERED OVERLY BRIGHT. TO A GREAT EXTENT MUCH DEPENDS ON THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE DC IS ABLE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT IT HAS LEARNED A LESSON FROM THE RESULTS OF THE RECENT ELECTIONS AND IS ACCORDINGLY PREPARED TO UNDERTAKE A THOROUGH RENEWAL. AT THE SAME TIME, A RECORD OF SOLID

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PAGE 04 ROME 13263 141128Z

ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY THE ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT WOULD BE A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION AND COULD PROVIDE THE STIMULUS FOR A MEASURE OF RAPPROACHMENT BETWEEN THE DC AND AT LEAST SOME OF THE LAY FORCES. CHANGES IN THE LEADERSHIP OF THE LAY PARTIES MIGHT ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO AN IMPROVEMENT OF INTER-PARTY RELATIONS. FINALLY, THE PCI COULD ALWAYS STUMBLE EITHER AS THE RESULT OF A MISPLAY ON THE DOMESTIC SCENE -- FOR EXAMPLE IT NOW COULD RECEIVE FULL BLAME FOR THE FALL OF AN ITALIAN GOVERNMENT LEADING TO ANOTHER PERIOD OF POLITICAL IMMOBILITY --, OF PRESSURES FROM A MORE CONSERVATIVE BASE, OR AS THE RESULT OF UNFORESEEN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS THAT CALL INTO QUESTION ITALY'S NATIONAL SECURITY OR THE PARTY'S CREDENTIALS AS A RESPONSIBLE, DEMOCRATIC FORCE.

6. COMMENT. WITHOUT DOUBT, THE CURRENT TREND IN RELATION-

SHIPS BETWEEN THE DEMOCRATIC PARTIES IS DANGEROUS FOR THE
FUTURE OF ITALIAN DEMOCRACY AND FOR OUR INTERESTS HERE. TO
THE EXTENT THAT THE ANIMOSITIES CONTINUE, AS THEY EXIST
TODAY, IT WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE TO PUT TOGETHER A SOLID
GOVERNMENT -- EITHER A MONOCOLORE OR A COALITION -- WHICH
IS NOT DEPENDENT ON PCI SUPPORT FOR ITS EXISTENCE. AND
IF THE PCI PLAYS ITS CARDS SHREWDLY UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES --
AND WE HAVE NO REASON TO DOUBT ITS ABILITY TO DO SO -- IT
BECOMES FOR THE ITALIAN POPULATION AN INCREASINGLY ACCEPTABLE
FORCE OF REASON, STABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY. AT THIS
JUNCTURE IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE DO WHATEVER WE CAN TO
ENCOURAGE THE RESTORATION OF MUTUAL TRUST BETWEEN THE
DEMOCRATIC PARTIES. THIS EFFORT WILL REQUIRE INTER ALIA
OUR PAYING GREATER ATTENTION TO THE LAY PARTIES IN THE DAYS
AND MONTHS AHEAD. VOLPE

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